

# Der Beitrag von Ernesto de Martino zur italienischen Kulturanthropologie

**Abstract.** — *De Martino (1908-1965) required of the anthropology of religion the extension of the historical method to include the analysis of magic and religion of non-occidental cultures in order to redefine in this mirror the potentiality and the limits of occidental rationality. — In his own work, that is set against positivism as well as against cultural relativism and ethnocentrism, he initially clears up the reality of the magical powers. Magic is then derived genetically from situations which signal psychologically and culturally a loss of control of the world. The effect of magic as an institution is to re-integrate the threatened groups into coherent social networks. This concept, which partly goes back to other scholars and partly coincides with theirs, has its weaknesses in stressing the stabilizing and defensive character of magic. According to de Martino, the political task of Ethnology and Folklore consists in contributing their share to overcome the socio-economic conditions of magic-producing situations by providing laical knowledge and information. His pioneering field-research in Southern Italy which is to a large extent continued by current Italian cultural anthropologists discovers widespread pre-Christian and anti-Catholic religious elements, in the assessment of which he remains true to his enlightened impulses. In the history of Italian cultural anthropology de Martino is, despite criticism of particulars, on a par with Pettazzoni and Lanternari.* [Methodology, Biographies, Magic, Psychotherapy, Folklore]

## 1. Vorbemerkung

Das Werk des italienischen Kulturanthropologen und Religionshistorikers Ernesto de Martino (1908-1965) ist außerhalb seines Landes bedauerlicherweise wenig bekannt.<sup>1</sup> In seinen brilliant geschriebenen Beiträgen, die einen

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<sup>1</sup> Ausgenommen sind Mircea Eliade, mit dem de Martino auch einen (unveröffentlichten) Briefwechsel unterhielt; bei uns Wilhelm Mühlmann und, von jüngeren Autoren, Thomas Hauschild (1981 und 1979).